

## EDITORIAL

## Open Access

# Editorial

Michael Narodoslawsky<sup>1</sup> and Dagmar Fiedler<sup>2\*</sup>

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that we present to you our new multidisciplinary, international open access journal in the field of novel energies published by Springer in cooperation with the European Sustainable Energy Innovation Alliance [eseia] and principal investigators from the Helmholtz Association. This journal is intended to provide the necessary scientific exchange platform to support a broad, interdisciplinary discourse in the complex field of innovative energy systems and sustainable development indispensable in this time of challenge and change.

We are currently witnessing profound challenges to the existing fossil- and nuclear-based energy system: high and volatile prices of crude oil, looming climate changes caused by carbon emissions, and finally, the nuclear disaster in Fukushima with the still unknown ecological, social, and economic consequences. An ever increasing number of scientists, business leaders, and politicians as well as a growing section of the general public in many nations are more and more convinced that these challenges can only be met by dramatically changing the total structure of our global energy system.

This change will encompass all elements of our current energy system, from resources and technologies to distribution grids. It will also deeply impact the interaction among the energy system, our natural environment, and society. As energy is the crucial foundation of almost all human activities, a profound change in the underlying energy system will have considerable repercussions on the structure of our society, economy, and even political power.

Almost all existing international ISI-indexed journals in the field of energy address scientific/technical and/or economic/political discipline-specific questions. This is a necessary service to scientific progress, but it is not sufficient to support the discourse about a systemic change as we see it rising over the horizon.

Complex topics such as (1) featuring a sustainable and economically feasible, as well as an environmentally and socially compatible, energy supply for human society, (2) considering 'ecological' conflicts introduced by renewable energy technologies, and (3) including new holistic and systemic solutions for the development of innovative future energy options have not been sufficiently covered thus far since they demand thorough interdisciplinary research as well as appropriate means of publication.

The challenge of providing an active platform for an interdisciplinary scientific discourse requires a broad and solid base of cooperation in editing and promoting this journal. Editors from the Helmholtz Association and the *eseia* are partners in this project which focuses on the challenges and expectations at the interface of science, environment, technology, and society.

Our new journal will be truly international in its scope, both in terms of contributions and editorial board structure. Therefore, we have invited a number of Advisory Board members from various areas of expertise in the field of novel energies with the primary duties of (1) cooperating in the review process, (2) winning the support of other colleagues, and (3) advising and making recommendations for the editorial policy and to the authors.

The broad base of expertise represented within our editorial team will allow us to guarantee high scientific standards, on the one side, and to publish interdisciplinary papers in the wide field characterized by change and innovation in the energy system, on the other.

The aim of our new journal is to provide an international and interdisciplinary forum for the discourse between natural, social, and political scientists and engineers, as well as experts from the industry and the public sector, who drive the innovation of sustainable energy systems. It is the particular aim of this journal to publish papers reaching across different disciplines and providing a substantial contribution to the holistic innovation of sustainable energy systems.

In line with the goal of this journal to offer an interdisciplinary forum of discourse for systemic energy

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innovation, the scope of the journal encompasses the whole innovation process ranging from scientific research to innovative approaches for the implementation of technology and the analysis of economic, social, and environmental impacts of sustainable energy systems. Primary emphasis will be placed on contributions addressing complex issues with innovation potential at the interface among technical solutions, their implementation, and their social, environmental, and economic impacts.

The journal publishes independently peer-reviewed original full-length research and review papers as well as book reviews. Of special interest are also short communications on innovative approaches. The editorial team will take particular responsibility to provide speedy and top-quality reviewing to our authors and to keep time from submission to publication as short as possible.

From time to time, *Energy, Sustainability and Society* will feature special editions (i.e., topical or conference article collections) that will focus on specific fields of interests. As an example, a special article collection will concentrate on the *Micro Perspectives for Decentralized Energy Supply* (with Martina Schaefer from the Technical University of Berlin as the guest editor). We will be pleased to publish this selected collection of invited papers providing an overview of the current status and the advances in this field in early 2012.

We are proud that our journal appears on SpringerOpen, Springer's new platform of fully open access journals which will cover all disciplines. SpringerOpen journals are fully and immediately accessible, i.e., they provide free access to peer-reviewed research articles. All articles published in *Energy, Sustainability and Society* are therefore made freely and permanently accessible online immediately after publication, without subscription charges or registration barriers.

The format of an open access journal has been deliberately chosen for several reasons. We not only intend to have a strong impact on the scientific community, but we also acknowledge the necessity to reach a wider audience of actors involved in energy system innovation. An open access journal allows us to reach across disciplinary as well as sectoral limitations. Furthermore, scientists and innovators from the third world have greater access to published research information than ever before, an advantage that is particularly important for a journal covering a field requiring global cooperation.

Moreover, a journal that encompasses a field which is regarded as being as dynamic as sustainable energy systems must also be quick in its processing of contributions from our authors. It is quite evident that a journal that uses electronic distribution has many advantages in this respect.

Open access journals also allow for a greater variation in the format of contributions to be published. This will also enable us to accommodate papers addressing complex issues that may not be sufficiently dealt with within the strict limitations of printed journals.

Other advantages are as follows:

- High visibility and international readership in our field
- Reuse of data by the public and by the industry
- Easy online submission and rapid publication
- Online manuscript tracking
- No color figure charges
- Authors retain copyright
- Increased impact factors and Thomas Reuters citation tracking
- Inclusion in all major bibliographic databases.

We would be pleased if you would accept our concept for *Energy, Sustainability and Society* and become readers of as well as contributors to our new journal. We are grateful for your trust and confidence, interest, and support best demonstrated by submitting articles of a high scientific quality.

Last but not the least, it is with great pleasure that we acknowledge the support and help we received during the course of concept preparation and the launch of our new journal. In particular, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to the staff of the staff of Springer (Heidelberg), Paul Roos and Monika Bechtold.

Dagmar Fiedler, first and foremost, would like to thank Wolfgang Babel (Leipzig) for his invaluable support and stimulating discussions throughout all stages of concept preparation for our new journal.

She would certainly like to acknowledge the great help and encouragement which she has received and continues to receive from the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research GmbH – UFZ (Leipzig) and in particular from Georg Teutsch and Frank Messner. Lastly, she is especially indebted to Beatrice Menz of the Birkhäuser Publishing LTD. (Basel) and Heinz Pampel of the Helmholtz Open Access Project (Potsdam) for their valuable advice.

Now, all that remains is for us to look forward to fruitful research in the exciting field of energy yet to come and hope to ensure that *Energy, Sustainability and Society* becomes an ultimate venue for publishing the results.

Sincerely yours,

Michael Narodoslawsky and Dagmar Fiedler  
(Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor)

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